

THE      ❁      ❁  
CHICAGO      ❁  
ADDRESSES



BY  
Swami Vivekanan

Published by Swami Satyakama, 12, 13 Copai  
Chandra Neogla Lane and printed  
by K. C. Ghosh, at The Lakshmi  
Printing Works, 44/1 & 44-2,  
Sukra Street, Calcutta.  
FOURTH EDITION.  
1910.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| Prefatory note   | i    |
| On Hinduism, the paper delivered<br>by the Swami Vivekananda at the World's<br>Parliament of Religions, Chicago on<br>September 19, 1893 | 17   |
| Short speeches   |      |
| 1 Response to Welcome,<br>September 11   | 61   |
| 2 The Reason for all Narrow minded<br>ness, September 15   | 65   |
| 3 What Christians can do for India,<br>September 20  | 68   |
| 4 Buddhism, & Fulfilment<br>of Hinduism September 26   | 70   |
| 5 Words at the Final Session<br>September 27   | 76   |
| Appendix   |      |
| Illustrations  |      |
| (i) Swami Vivekananda a portrait   |      |
| (ii) Scene of a session of the Parliament  |      |

---



of abstract research and practical discoveries on many branches of knowledge, are all regarded as ends to be promoted by the vast assemblies of human beings who are brought together in the name of an international exhibition. With American daring and originality, however, it occurred to the city of Chicago that the crown of all such congresses would be a congress of the leading religions of the world. It proposed to offer a hearing, therefore, to delegates from each of these, and to listen seriously and sympathetically while they set forth, each man his own reasons, for the faith that was in him. Meeting thus on a footing of equality, and ordered freedom of speech, the

delegates would form a parliament and a parliament of religions. The grounds for fraternal union in the religions of different peoples would surely thus be set clearly before the mind of the world.

Entirely unaware of the formalities of invitation and election proper to the sending forth of a delegate a little group of disciples in Southern India hastened to urge upon their own guru the desirability of being present on this occasion to speak on behalf of the religion of the Hindus. To their unbounded faith it never occurred that they were demanding what was humanly speaking impossible. They thought that Vivekananda had only to appear and be given his

chance. The Swami himself was as simple in the ways of the world as these his disciples, and when he was once sure that he was divinely called to make the attempt, he put no further difficulties in the way. Nothing could have been more typical of the unorganisedness of Hinduism itself than this going forth of its representative unannounced, and without formal credentials, to enter the strongly guarded doors of the world's wealth and power. When he reached Chicago however, the Swami discovered the actual facts of the situation. He had been sent by no recognised body in accordance with invitations issued and accepted. Moreover the time

for adding to the number of delegates had gone by, the lists were full. In what deep discouragement he must have turned away from the closed doors of Chicago in order to follow up some chance introduction in Boston, before returning to India!

Thus without foresight or plan of his own, he was led to one—Professor Wright, of Harvard University—who could recognise his genius, and feel, with his Madras disciples, that the world must hear this man's voice at the forthcoming parliament. 'To ask you for your credentials' wrote Professor Wright to him later—is like asking the sun to state his right to shine. Such was the love

and influence that sent the Swami back to Chicago and opened the way for him there to recognition and place, as an accepted delegate. When the Parliament actually opened he was on the platform, and though not the only Indian or even the only Bengali present he was the only representative of Hinduism proper. Others stood for societies or churches or sects but he and he alone had for his theme the religious ideas of the Hindus those ideas that that day for the first time, through him received unity and definition and form. The religion of India—as he had seen it in his own Master at Dukshineswara and afterwards in years of wandering up and down

India—was what poured from his lips. And always it was those ideas in which India is at one and never those in which she is divided, of which he spoke. The international aspect of the Parliament of Religions took seventeen days of Paper reading. The Swami Vivekananda's Paper was read on the 19th. But ever since the first day when a series of formal addresses of welcome had been offered to the delegates and their replies heard the Swami had been in touch with his audience. His reply had come late in the afternoon and the thrill that passed through the great assembly when he uttered the simple Indian greeting Sisters and Brothers, of

America —when he, a monk from the East put women first, and called the whole world his family— has often been described to me by those who heard ‘Not one of our own people had thought of that!’ they say His success was probably assured from that hour Afterwards it became a common practice with the promoters of the meetings to bribe a troublesome audience into patience, by promising them that at the end, if they waited, the Swami would tell them a story or make them a speech Some few of these fragments have been preserved, and these appear in this little book as short intercalary utterances

\*, This religious congress marks

an era in the history of Hinduism whose importance will be more and more deeply understood as time goes on. And merely from the point of view of external brilliance and splendour the assembly of delegates must at its opening and close have offered a spectacle whose like none in our time shall see again. The religious beliefs of hundreds of millions of men were represented on the platform, and in striving to realise the scene we may quote a passage from the authorised history of its proceedings by the Rev John Henry Barrows

Long before the appointed hour the building swarmed with delegates and visitors, and the Hall of Columbus was

crowded with four thousand eager listeners from all parts of the country and foreign lands. At 10 o'clock there marched down the aisle arm in arm, the representatives of a dozen world faiths beneath the waving flags of many nations and amid the enthusiastic cheering of the vast audience. The platform at this juncture presented a most picturesque and impressive spectacle. In the centre clad in scarlet robes and seated in a high chair of state was Cardinal Gibbons the highest prelate of his Church in the United States who as was fitting in this Columbian year was to open the meeting with prayer.

On either side of him were grouped the Oriental delegates whose own coloured raiment vied with his own in brilliancy. Conspicuous among these followers of Brahma and Buddha and

Mahammad was the eloquent monk Vivekananda of Bombay, clad in gorgeous red apparel, his bronzed face surmounted with a huge turban of yellow. Beside him, attired in orange and white, sat B B Nagarkar of the Brahma Samaj or association of Hindu Theists, and Dharmapala, the learned Buddhist Scholar from Ceylon, who brought the greetings of four hundred and seventy five millions of Buddhists, and whose slight, little person was swathed in pure white, while his black hair fell in curls upon his shoulders.

There were present, also, Mahammedan and Parsee and Jain ecclesiastics each a picturesque study in colour and movement and all eager to explain and defend their forms of faith.

The most gorgeous group was composed of the Chinese and Japanese delegates great dignitaries in their own

country, arrayed in costly silk vestments of all the colours of the rainbow, and officially representing the Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian and Shinto forms of worship

In dark, almost ascetic garb, there sat among his fellow Orientals, Protap Chunder Mazoomdar Mr Mazoomdar, the leader of the Brahmo-Samaj or Hindoo Theists in India, visited this country some years since, and delighted large audiences with his eloquence and perfect command of the English tongue

Another striking figure was the Greek Archbishop of Zante, his venerable beard sweeping his chest, his head crowned with a strange looking hat leaning on a quaintly carved staff, and displaying a large silver cross suspended from his girdle. A ruddy-cheeked, long locked Greek monk from

Asia Minor, who sat by his side, boasted that he had never yet worn a head covering or spent a penny of his own for food or shelter

The ebon hued but bright faces of Bishop Arnett of the African Methodist Church and of a young African prince were relieved by the handsome costumes of the ladies of the company while forming a sombre background to all was the dark raiment of the Protestant delegates and invited guests \*

Well might the Swami Vivekananda in his closing speech compare the world convocation he saw before him with the Council of Asoka or the conventions of the Emperor Akbar thus indicating his own estimate of its historic import

\* From a sermon by the Rev Mr Wendte of Oakland California.

ance. Only the audacity of the youngest of nations could have conceived a scheme so vast in its ambition only the height of civic energy and enthusiasm could have found the means to carry it out. The constitution of the parliament made it an extraordinary *mise en scene* for the pronouncement of the all inclusive ideas of Hinduism. The haughtiest and most exclusive faiths of the world were all gathered there on a simple democratic basis of equality and mutual respect and courtesy. It is not likely that they will ever again submit on such a scale to such an ordeal. The Chicago Parliament is likely for a very long time to come to stand alone in history. Mean

## On Hinduism

Three religions now stand in the world which have come down to us from time pre historic—Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Judaism. All of them have received tremendous shocks and all of them prove by their survival their internal strength. But while Judaism failed to absorb Christianity and was driven out of its place of birth by its all conquering daughter and while a handful of Parsis is all that now remains to tell the tale of their grand religion sect after sect arose in India seeming to shake the religion of the Vedas to its very depths but like the waters of the sea

shore in a tremendous earthquake, this would recede for a while only to return in an all absorbing flood, a thousand times more vigorous and when the tumult of the rush was over, these sects were all sucked in absorbed and assimilated into the immense body of the mother faith

All kinds of thought from the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, down to the lowest ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology the agnosticism of the Buddhists and the atheism of the Jains each and all has a place in the Hindu religion

Where then the question arises,

where is the common centre upon which all these widely diverging radii converge ? Where is the common basis upon which all these seemingly hopeless contradictions rest ? And this is the question I shall now attempt to answer

The Hindus have received their religion through revelation the Vedas. They hold that the Vedas are without beginning and without end. It may sound ludicrous to this audience that a book can be without beginning or end. But by the Vedas no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual law discovered by different persons at different times. Just as the law of gravitation acted before its discovery by humanity

you would continue to act if all humanity forgot it, so is it with the laws that govern the spiritual world. The moral, ethical, and spiritual relations that exist between soul and soul, and between individual spirits and the Father of all spirit were there before our discovery of them and would still remain even if we forgot them.

The discoverers of these laws are called Rishis, and we honour them as perfected beings. I am glad to tell this audience that some of the very greatest of them were women.

Here it may be urged that these laws as laws may be without end, but they must have had a beginning. Now the Vedas teach us that creation is without beginning or end.

Science has proved to us that when the sum total of cosmic energy is living, it is the same. Then, if there was a time when nothing existed, where was all this manifested energy? Some say it was in a potential form in God. In that case God is sometimes potential and sometimes kinetic which would make him mutable. Everything mutable is a compound and everything compound must undergo that change which is called destruction. So God would die which is absurd. Therefore there never was a time when there was no creation.

If I may be allowed to use a simile, creator and creation are two lines without beginning and without end, running parallel to each other.

and weaver, an ever active provident under Whom system after system is being evolved out of chaos to run for a time, and again destroyed. This is what the Hindu boy repeats every day with his Guru. *"This sun and this moon the Lord has created, like the suns and moons of previous cycles"* And this agrees with modern science.

Here I stand, and if I shut my eyes, and try to conceive of my own existence, "I," "I," "I"—what is the idea before me? The idea of a body. Am I, then, nothing but a combination of material substances? The Vedas declare No, I am a spirit living in a body. I am not the body. The body will die but I shall not die.

Here am I in this body, and when it fails I shall still go on living. Also I had a past. The soul was not created out of nothing. For creation means a combination and that again means a certain future dissolution. Hence if the soul was created, it must also die. Therefore it was not created. Again, some are born happy and enjoy perfect health with beautiful bodies mental vigour and all their wants supplied. Others are born miserable some are without hands or feet others again are idiots and only drag out a wretched existence. Why if they were all created did a just and merciful God create one happy and the other unhappy why was He so partial? Nor does it in the

least mend matters to hold that those who are miserable in this life will be perfect in a future one. Why should a man be miserable even here in the reign of a just and merciful God ? In the second place this idea of the creator God does not even attempt to assign any cause to the anomalies of creation but simply postulates the cruel fiat of an all powerful being. Thus on the face of it it is unscientific. There must have been causes then before his birth to make a man after it miserable or happy and those causes were his own past actions.

Are not the tendencies of mind and body accounted for by aptitudes inherited from parents. Here are

two parallel lines of existence—one that of mind—the other that of matter. If matter and its transformations sufficiently answer for all that we are, there can be no necessity to suppose the existence of a soul. But it cannot be proved that thought has been evolved out of matter, and if monism is philosophically inevitable, a spiritual monism is quite as logical and not less desirable than materialistic. But neither of these is necessary at this point.

We cannot deny that bodies acquire certain tendencies by heredity, but this refers only to the physical configuration through which a particular tendency of the mind has to be manifested. The cause

leas \*

of such a particular tendency in that mind lies in its own past actions. And a soul with a certain tendency will by the laws of affinity take birth in that body which is the fittest instrument for the display of that tendency. This is in perfect accordance with science, for science wants to explain everything by habit, and habit is acquired through repetition. So it is necessary to assume repetition in order to explain the natural habits of a new born soul. And since these habits have not been arrived at in this present life, they must have come down from past lives.

There is another suggestion. Taking all this for granted, how is it that I do not remember anything?

of my past life ? This can easily be explained I am now speaking English It is not my mother-tongue In fact no words of my mother tongue are now present in my consciousness But let me try for a moment to bring them up and they rush in This shows that consciousness is only the surface of the mental ocean, and that within its depths are stored up all our experiences Only try and struggle They will all come back and you will be conscious even of your past lives

This is direct and demonstrative evidence Verification is the perfect proof of a theory and here is the challenge thrown to the world by the Rishis We have discovered

the secret by which the very depths of the ocean of memory can be stirred up—try it and you will obtain the complete memory of your past lives. So then the Hindu believes that he is a spirit.

Him the sword cannot pierce—  
Him the fire cannot burn—Him the  
water cannot melt—Him the air  
cannot dry. The Hindu believes  
that every soul is a circle whose  
~~circumference is nowhere~~ though its  
centre is located in the body and  
that death only means the change  
of this centre from one body to  
another. Nor is the soul bound by  
the conditions of matter. In its  
very essence it is free unbounded  
holy pure and perfect. But some

how or other it finds itself bound down by matter and thinks of itself as matter

Why should the free perfect and pure being be thus under the thrall of matter? is the next question. How can the perfect be deluded into the belief that he is imperfect? We have been told that Hindus shirk this question and say that it cannot be asked. Some thinkers want to answer it by positing one or more *quasi perfect* beings and use big scientific names to fill up the gap. But naming is not explaining. The question remains the same. How can the perfect become the *quasi perfect*? How can the pure the absolute change even a microscopic particle

of its nature? But the Hindu is sincere. He does not want to take shelter under sophistry. He is brave enough to face the question in a manly fashion. And his answer is, "I do not know how the perfect being, the soul, came to think of itself as imperfect, as joined to and conditioned by matter. But the fact is a fact for all that. It is a fact in every body's consciousness that he thinks of himself as the body." He does not attempt to explain why it is so, why one is in the body. The answer, that it is the will of God, is no explanation. This is nothing more than what the Hindu says, "I do not know."

Well, then, the human soul is eternal and immortal, perfect and

infinite, and death means only a change of centre from one body to another. The present is determined by our past actions and the future by the present. The soul will go on evolving up or reverting back from birth to birth and death to death. But here is another question. Is man a tiny boat in a tempest raised one moment on the forming crest of a billow and dashed down into a yawning chasm the next rolled to and fro at the mercy of his own good and bad actions—a powerless helpless wreck in an ever raging ever rushing uncompromising current of cause and effect—a little moth placed under the wheel of causation which rolls on crushing everything in its way and

waits not for the widow's tears or the orphan's cry ? The heart sinks at the idea yet such is the law of Nature Is there no hope ? Is there no escape ? was the cry that went up from the depths of the heart of despair. It reached the throne of mercy, and words of hope and consolation came down and inspired a Vedic sage, and he stood up before the world and in trumpet voice proclaimed the glad tidings, 'Hear, ye children of immortal bliss ! even ye that reside in higher spheres ! I have found the Ancient One Who is beyond all darkness, and delusion knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death again and again ' "Children of immortal bliss !" — what a sweet what a

hopeful name ! Allow me to call you brethren by that sweet name—heirs of immortal bliss —yet the Hindu refuses to call you sinners Ye are the children of God the sharers of immortal bliss holy and perfect beings Ye are divinities on earth Sinners ? it is a sin to call a man so It is a standing libel on human nature Come up Oh lions and shake off the delusion that you are sheep ! You are souls immortal spirits free and eternal and blessed Ye are not matter Ye are not bodies Matter is your servant not you its slaves

Thus it is that the Vedas proclaim not a dreadful combination of unforgiving laws not an endless prison of cause and effect but that

at the head of all these laws, in and through every particle of matter and force, stands One "By whose command the wind blows the fire burns the clouds rain and death stalks upon the earth

And what is His nature ?

He is everywhere the pure and formless One the Almighty and the All merciful Thou art our father Thou art our mother Thou art our beloved friend Thou art the source of all strength Give us strength Thou art He that beareth the burdens of the universe help me to bear the little burden of this life ! Thus sang the Rishis of the Veda And how are we to worship Him ? Through love He is to be worshipped as the one beloved

dearer than anything in this life or the next

This is the doctrine of love declared in the Ved is Let us see how it is fully developed and preached by Krishna, whom the Hindus believe to have been God incarnate on earth

He thought that a man ought to live in this world like a lotus leaf which grows in water but is never wet by the water, so a man ought to live in the world—his heart to God and his hands to work

It is good to love God for the hope of reward in this world or the next, but it is better to love God for love's sake And the prayer goes "Lord I want neither wealth, nor children, nor learning I will go

through a hundred perils if it be Thy will but grant me only this that I may love Thee without the hope of reward—unselfishly love for love's own sake' One of the disciples of Krishna the then Emperor of India was driven from his throne by his enemies and had to take shelter with his queen in a forest in the Himalayas There one day the queen asked him how it was that he the most virtuous of men had to suffer so much misery? Yudhisthira answered

Behold my queen the Himalayas how grand and beautiful they are I love them They do not give me anything But my nature is to love the grand and the beautiful, and therefore do I love them Similarly,

I love the Lord He is the source of all beauty, of all sublimity. He is the only object to be loved, my nature is to love Him, and therefore I love I do not pray for anything, I do not ask for anything Let Him place me wherever He likes I must love Him for love's sake, I cannot trade in love "

The Vedas teach that the soul is divine, only held under the bondage of matter, and that perfection will be reached when the bonds shall break And the word they use for salvation therefore is *Mukti*—freedom, freedom from the bonds of imperfection, freedom from death and misery

This bondage can only fall off through the mercy of God, and this

mercy comes to the pure So purity is the condition of His mercy How that mercy acts ! He reveals Himself to the pure heart , and the pure and stainless man sees God, yet even in this life Then and then only, all the crookedness of the heart is made straight Then all doubt ceases Man is no longer the sport of the terrible laws of causation This is the very centre, the very vital conception of Hinduism The Hindu does not want to live on words and theories If there are existences beyond the ordinary sensuous existence, he wants to come face to face with them If there is a soul in him which is not matter if there is an all merciful universal Soul he will

go to Him direct He must see Him ---That alone can destroy all doubt So the best proof a Hindu sage gives about the soul about God is I have seen the soul I have seen God And that is the only condition of perfection The Hindu religion does not consist in struggles and attempts to believe a certain doctrine or dogma but in realizing not in believing but in being and becoming

Thus the whole object of their sytem is by constant struggle to become perfect to become divine to reach God and see God and this reaching God seeing God becoming perfect even as the Father in Heaven is perfect constitutes the religion of the Hindus

And what becomes of a man when he attains perfection? He lives a life of bliss infinite. He enjoys infinite and perfect bliss,—having obtained God, the only thing in which man ought to find pleasure,—and enjoys that bliss with God. So far all the Hindus are agreed. This is the common religion of all the sects of India.

But then the question comes, perfection is absolute, and the absolute cannot be two or three. It cannot have any qualities. It cannot be an individual. And so when a soul becomes perfect and absolute it must become one with Brahman and realize the Lord only as the reality and perfection, of its own nature and existence — Existence absolute,

Knowledge absolute, and Bliss absolute We have often and often read about this as the losing of individuality and becoming a stock or a stone ' He jests at scars that never felt a wound

I tell you it is nothing of the kind If it is happiness to enjoy the consciousness of this small body, it must be greater happiness to enjoy the consciousness of two bodies and so on the measure of happiness increasing with the consciousness of an increasing number of bodies hence the aim the ultimate of happiness should be reached when it becomes a universal consciousness

Therefore to gain this infinite universal individuality this miserable little prison individuality must

chemistry could progress no further, if it once discovered that one element out of which all others could be made. Physics must stop if it were able to complete its service by discovering one energy of which all others were but manifestations and the science of religion becomes perfect when it has discovered Him who is the one life in a universe of death. Him who is the constant basis of an ever changing world. One who is the only Soul of which all souls are but delusive manifestations. Thus was it through multiplicity and duality that the ultimate unity was reached. Religion can go no further. This is the goal of all knowledge. Science upon science—again and again

All science is bound to come to this conclusion in the long run. Manifestation, and not creation, is the word of science to-day, and the Hindu is only glad that what he has been cherishing in his bosom for ages is now going to be taught in more forcible language, and with further light, from the latest conclusions of science.

Descend we now from the aspirations of philosophy to the religion of the ignorant. At the very outset, I may tell you that there is no *polytheism* in India. In every temple, if one stands by and listens, one will find the worshippers applying all the attributes of God, including omnipresence to the images. It is not polytheism, nor would the

name henotheism explain the situation The rose by any other name would smell as sweet Names are not explanations

I remember as a boy hearing a Christian missionary preaching to a crowd in India Among other sweet things he was saying to them was if he gave a blow to their idol with his stick what could it do ? One of his hearers sharply answered If I abuse your God what can He do ? You would be punished said the preacher 'when you die

So my idol will punish you when you die' retorted the Hindu The tree is known by its fruits When I have seen amongst those who are called idolaters men the like of whom for morality and spirituality

and love I have never seen any where. I stop and ask myself, 'Can sin beget holiness ?

Superstition is a great enemy of man, but bigotry is worse. Why does a Christian go to church ? Why is the cross holy ? Why is the face turned towards the sky in prayer ? Why are there so many images in the Catholic Church ? Why are there so many images in the minds of Protestants when they pray ? My brethren we can no more think about anything without a mental image than we can live without breathing. By the law of association the material image calls up the mental idea and *vice versa*. This is why the Hindu uses an external symbol when he

worships. He will tell you it helps to keep his mind fixed on the Being to whom he prays. He knows as well as you do that the image is not God, is not Omnipresent. After all how much does omnipresence mean to most men to almost the whole world in fact? It stands merely as a word a symbol. Has God superficial area? If not, when we repeat the word omnipresent we think of the extended sky or of space, that is all.

As we find that somehow or other, by the laws of our mental constitution we have to associate our ideas of infinity with the image of the blue sky, or of the sea so, we naturally connect our idea of holiness with the image of a church,

a mosque or a cross. The Hindus have associated holiness, purity, omnipresence, and such ideas with different images and forms. But with this difference, while some people devote their whole lives to their idol of a church and never rise higher, because with them religion means an intellectual assent to certain doctrines, and doing good to their fellows, the whole religion of the Hindu is centred in realization. Man is to become divine by realizing the divine. Idols or temples or churches or books are only the supports, the helps, of his spiritual childhood : but on and on he must progress.

He must not stop anywhere,

*"External worship material worship,"* say the Vedas, *"is the lowest stage, struggling to rise, mental prayer is the next stage, but the highest stage is when the Lord has been realized"* Mark, the same earnest man who is kneeling before the idol tells you *Him the sun cannot express, nor the moon nor the stars The very lightning cannot express Him, nor what we speak of as fire Through Him do all these shine* But he does not abuse any one's idol or call its worship sin He recognizes in it a necessary stage of life *The child is father of the man* Would it be right for an old man to say that childhood is a sin or youth a sin?

Nor is the use of images com

pulsory in Hinduism Only if a man can realize his divine nature more easily with the help of an image would it be right to call that a sin ? Nor even when he has passed that stage should he call it an error To the Hindu man is not travelling from error to truth but from truth to truth from lower truth to higher truth To him all religions from the lowest fetichism to the highest absolutism mean so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realize the Infinite each determined by the conditions of its birth and association Each of these marks a stage of progress and every soul is a young eagle soaring higher and higher gathering more and more strength till it reaches the Glorious Sun

Unity in variety is the plan of nature and the Hindu has recognized it. Every other religion lays down certain fixed dogmas and tries to force the whole of society to adopt them. They place before society one coat which must fit Jack and Job and Henry all alike. If it should happen not to fit John or Henry he must go without coat to cover body. The Hindus have discovered that the absolute can only be realized or thought of or stated through the relative and that images crosses and crescents are simply so many symbols so many pegs to hang the spiritual idea on. It is not that this help is necessary for every one but it is so for many and those who do not

need it themselves, have no right to say that it is wrong.

One thing I must tell you. Idolatry does not mean in India anything horrible. It is not the mother of harlots. On the other hand, it is the attempt of undeveloped minds to grasp high spiritual truths. The Hindus have their faults, they sometimes have their exceptions ; but mark this, they are always for punishing their own bodies, and never for cutting the throats of their neighbours. If the Hindu fanatic burns himself on the pyre, 'he never lights the fire of Inquisition. And even this cannot be laid at the door of his religion, any more than the burning of witches can be laid at the door of Christianity

To the Hindu, then, the whole world of religions is only a travelling, & coming up of different men and women, through various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal. Every religion is only an evolving of God out of the material man and the same God is the inspirer of all of them. Why then, are there so many contradictions? They are only apparent, says the Hindu. The contradictions come from the same truth adapting itself to the varying circumstances of different natures.

It is the same light coming through glasses of different colour. And these little variations are necessary for purposes of adaptation.

But in the heart of everything the same truth reigns. The Lord has declared to the Hindu in his incarnation as Krishna "*I am in every religion as the thread through a string of pearls. Wherever thou seest extraordinary holiness and extraordinary power raising and purifying humanity know thou that I am there*". And what has been the result? I challenge the world to find throughout the whole system of Sanskrit Philosophy, any such statement as that the Hindu alone will be saved and not others. Says Vyasa "*We find perfect men even beyond the pale of our own caste and creed*". One thing more. How then can the Hindu whose whole fabric of thought centres in God believe

in Buddhism which is agnostic or in Jainism which is atheistic?

The Buddhists and Jains do not depend upon God but all the same the whole force of their religion is directed to that great central truth of every religion the evolving of God out of man. They have not seen the Father but they have seen the Son. And he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father also.

This brethren is a short sketch of the religious ideas of the Hindus. The Hindu may have failed to carry out all his plans but if there is ever to be a universal religion it must be one which holds no location in place or time which is infinite like the God it preaches.

Whose sun shines upon the followers of Krishna and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike, not Brahmanic or Buddhistic, Christian or Mahomedan, but the sum total of all these, yet still keeping infinite space for development, which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms, and find a place for, every human being, from the lowest grovelling savage, not far removed from the brute, to the highest man, towering by the virtues of his head and heart almost above humanity, and making society stand in awe of him and doubt his human nature. It will be a religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its polity, which will recognize divinity in every man and woman, whose

whole scope, whose whole force will be centred in aiding humanity to realize its own true and divine nature.

Offer such a religion and all the nations will follow you Asoka's council was a council of the Buddhist faith Akbar's, though more to the purpose, was only a parlour meeting It was reserved for America to proclaim to all the quarters of the globe that the Lord is in every faith

May He Who is the Brahman of the Hindus, the Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jehovah of the Jews and the Father in Heaven of the Christians, give strength to you to carry out your noble idea The star arose in the East it travelled stead

ily towards the West, sometimes dimmed and sometimes effulgent, till it made a circuit of the world, and now it is again rising on the very horizon of the East, the borders of the Tasifu, a thousand fold more effulgent than ever it was before

Hail Columbia, motherland of liberty ! It has been given to thee, who hast never dipped thine hand in thy neighbour's blood who hast never found out that the shortest way to become rich was to rob one's neighbours it has been given to thee to march onwards, in the vanguard of civilisation carrying the flag of harmony.

---

# SHORT ADDRESSES.

At the Parliament.

---



THE DEBATE IN THE CHAMBER OF THE COMMONS IN THE SWAMP  
SCENE OF A SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENT

# Response to Welcome

Sisters and Brothers of America

It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world. I thank you in the name of the mother of religions. and I thank you in the name of the millions and millions of the Hindu people of all classes and sects.

My thanks also, to some of the speakers on this platform who referring to the delegates from the Orient have told you that these men from far off nations may well claim the honor of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. Not

only do we believe in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true I am proud to tell you that I belong to a religion, into whose sacred language, the Sanskrit, the word *exclusion* is untranslatable. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the refugees and the persecuted of all the religions and all the nations of the earth I am proud to tell you that we have gathered into our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, a remnant who came to Southern India, and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered by Roman tyranny I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered, and is still fostering, the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation. I will quote to you brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, a hymn which is every

day repeated by millions of human beings *As different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their waters in the sea so O Lord do the different paths which men through their different tendencies take various though they appear, crooked and straight alike all lead to thee*

The present convention which is one of the most august assemblies ever held is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world, of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita *Whosoever come to me, by whatsoever form him do I reach All men are struggling along paths which lead in the end to me* Sectarianism bigotry and its horrible descendant fanaticism have long possessed this beautiful earth They have filled it with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilizations and sent whole nations to despair Had it not been for

these horrible demons, human society would by this time have been far more advanced than it now is. But their time is come, and I fervently hope that the bell that rang this morning in honor of this convention may prove the death knell to all fanaticism, to all persecutions by sword or pen, and to all uncharitable feelings between human beings wending their way to the same goal.

---

## The reason for all narrow mindedness.

I will tell you a little story You have heard the eloquent speaker who has just finished say Let us cease from abusing one another and he was very sorry that there should always be so much variance

But I think I may tell you a story which illustrates the causes of this variance A frog lived in a well It had lived there for a long time It had been born there and brought up there and was still a very small frog Of course the evolutionists were not there then to tell us whether this frog had lost its eyes or not but for our story's sake we must take it for granted that it had kept them and that every day it cleansed the water of all the worms and brills

that lived in it with an energy that would do credit to our modern bacteriologists. In this way it went on and became a little sleek and fat, perhaps as much so as myself! Well, one day there came another frog whose home was in the sea and fell into the well

‘Where are you from?’

I am from the sea.

The sea, how big is that? Is it as big as my well? and he took a leap from one side of the well to the other

‘My friend, said the frog from the sea how can you compare the sea with your little well?’

Then the frog took another leap and asked ‘Is your sea so big?’

‘What nonsense you talk to compare the sea with your well!’

But,” said the frog of the well ‘nothing can be bigger than my well. There

is nothing bigger in the whole world! This fellow is a liar Turn him out !'

That has been the difficulty all along I am a Hindu I am sitting in my own place, and thinking that the whole world is my little well The Christian does the same, and thinks the whole world is his well. The Mahommedan sits in his, and thinks that it is the whole world. I have to thank you of America, for the great attempt you are making to break down the barriers of this little world of ours I hope that, sooner or later, the Lord will help you to accomplish your purposes

## What Christians Can do for India

Christians must always be ready for plain speaking, and I hardly think that you will mind if I make a little criticism. You Christians, who are so fond of sending out missionaries to save the souls of the heathen—Why do you not try to save their bodies from starvation? In India during the terrible famines thousands died from hunger yet you, Christians did nothing. You erect churches all through India but the crying evil in the East is not religion—they have religion enough—it is bread that the suffering millions of burning India cry out for, with parched throats. They ask us for bread but we give them stones. It is an insult to a starving people to offer them religion.

it is an insult to a starving man to teach him metaphysics In India a priest that preached for money would lose caste and be spat upon by the people I came here to seek aid for my impoverished people and I fully realized how difficult it was to get help for the heathens from Christians in a Christian land

---

## Buddhism, a fulfilment of Hinduism

I am not a Buddhist, as you have heard, and yet I am. If China, or Japan, or Ceylon follow the teachings of the Great Master, India worships Him as God incarnate on earth. You have just now heard that I am going to criticise Buddhism but by that I wish you to understand only this. Far be it from me to criticise him whom I worship as God incarnate on earth. But our views upon Buddha are that he was not understood properly by his disciples. The relation between Hinduism—by Hinduism I mean the religion of the Vedas and what is called Buddhism at the present day is nearly the same as that between Judaism and Christianity. Jesus Christ was

a Jew, and *Shakya muni* was a Hindu. The Jews rejected Jesus Christ, nay, crucified Him, but the Hindus accepted *Shakya muni* as God, and worship Him. But the real difference that we Hindus want to show between modern Buddhism and what we should understand as the teachings of Lord Buddha, lies principally in this. *Shakya muni* came to preach nothing new. He also, like Jesus, came to fulfil, and not to destroy. Only in the case of Jesus, it was the old people, the Jews who did not understand him while in the case of Buddha it was his own followers who did not realise the import of his teachings. As the Jew did not understand the fulfilment of the Old Testament, so the Buddhist did not understand the fulfilment of the truths of the Hindu religion. Again, I repeat *Shakya muni* came not to destroy, but

to be the fulfilment, the logical conclusion, the logical development of the religion of the Hindus

The religion of the Hindus is divided into two parts, the ceremonial and the spiritual, the spiritual portion is specially studied by the monks. In that there is no caste. A man from the highest caste or a man from the lowest may become a monk in India and the two castes become equal. In religion there is no caste. Caste is simply a social institution. *Shakyamuni* himself was a monk and it is his glory that he had the large heartedness to bring out truths from the hidden Vedas and scatter them broadcast to the whole world. He was the first being in the world to bring missionarising into practice—nay he was the first to conceive the very idea of proselytizing.

The great glory of the Master lay in his wonderful sympathy for every one, but especially for the ignorant and the poor. Some of his disciples were Brahmins. When Buddha was teaching, Sanskrit was no longer the spoken language of India. It was then to be found only in the books of the learned. Some of Buddha's Brahmin disciples wanted to translate his teachings into Sanskrit, but he distinctly told them, 'I am for the poor. I am for the people. Let me speak in the tongue of the people. And so to this day the great bulk of his teachings remain in the Indian vernacular of that age.

Whatever may be the position of Philosophy, whatever may be the position of Metaphysics so long as there is such a thing as death in the world so long as there is such a thing as weakness in the human heart so long

as a cry goes forth from the heart of man in his utmost weakness so long there will be faith in God

On the philosophic side the disciples of the Great Master dashed themselves against the eternal rocks of the Vedas and could not crush them and on the other side they took away from the nation that eternal God to which every one man or woman clings so fondly And the result was that Buddhism in India had to die a natural death At the present day there is not one who calls himself a Buddhist in India the land of its birth

But at the same time Brahminism lost something—that reforming zeal that wonderful sympathy and charity for everybody that wonderful leaven which Buddhism wrought into the masses rendering Indian society so great that a Greek historian who wrote about

the India of that time was led to say that no Hindu was known to tell an untruth and no Hindu woman was known to be unchaste

Hinduism cannot live without Buddhism, nor Buddhism without Hinduism. Then realise what the separation has shown to us, that the Buddhist cannot stand without the brain and philosophy of the Brahmin nor the Brahmin without the heart of the Buddhist. This separation between Buddhist and Brahmin has been the cause of the downfall of India. This is why India is populated by three hundred millions of beggars, and this is why India has been the slave of conquerors for the last thousand years. Let us then strive to unite to the marvellous intellect of the Brahmin the heart the noble soul and the wonderful humanising power of the Great Master.

## Words at the Final Session

The World's Parliament of Religions is now an accomplished fact and the merciful Father has helped those who laboured to bring it into existence and crowned with success their most unselfish labour

My thanks to those noble souls whose large hearts and love of truth first dreamed this wonderful dream and then realized it My thanks to the shower of liberal sentiments that has overflowed this platform My thanks to this enlightened audience for their uniform kindness to me and for their appreciation of every thought that tends to smooth the friction of religions. A few jarring notes were heard from time to time in this harmony My special thanks to

them, for they have, by their striking contrast, made our general harmony the sweeter

Much has been said of the common ground of religious unity I am not going just now to venture my own theory. But if any one here hopes that this unity will come by the triumph of any one of these religions and the destruction of the others, to him I say 'Brother, yours is an impossible hope' Do I wish that the Christian should become Hindu? God forbid Do I wish that the Hindu or Buddhist should become Christian? God forbid

The seed is put into the ground and earth and air and water are placed around it Does the seed become the earth or the air, or the water? No It becomes a plant it develops after the law of its own growth, assimilates the air, the earth and the water, converts them

into plant substance, and grows up a plant.

Similar is the case with religion. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve its own individuality and grow according to its own law of growth.

If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this. It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every relig-

ion will soon be written, in spite of their resistance "Help and Not Fight," "Assimilation and Not Destruction," "Harmony and Peace and Not Dissension."

## **APPENDIX.**

## APPENDIX

— 0 —

The reader might be informed here that four such utterances of the Swami in the conferences that used to take place in the Scientific Section of the Parliament of Religions, have not been found. The dates, the hours and the subjects on which the Swami spoke, have been recorded in the Rev J H Barrow's book on the World's Parliament of Religions, as follows (vide Vol. 1, pages 132, 133 and 134)

Friday, September 22, 19 30 A. M.

Address by Rev. Swami Vivekananda

*Conference on Orthodox Hinduism and the Vedanta Philosophy*

Afternoon Session

• • •

Rev. Swami Vivekananda a Sannyasi, or Monk;

And by Mr. Merwin Marie Snell

*Conference on the Modern Religions of India*

Saturday, September 23

\* \* \*

Address by Swami Vivekananda

*Conference on the Subject of the foregoing  
addresses*

Monday, September 2, (Afternoon Session)

\* \* \*

*The Essence of the Hindu Religion* Rev  
Swami Vivekananda

\* \* \*

/ We can very well presume that speaking in defence of Hinduism in one of these meetings the Swami pointed out to his audience so forcibly the absurdity of judging a religion or a whole people by a few superficial facts gathered at random and without much discrimination from their lives as has become the fashion of the day and quote the following to bear testimony to the same from a recent well known book

— A striking illustration of what in another case would be termed insularity of our look was brought to view by a noted Hindu when addressing in a vast audience at the World's Congress of Religions in America, in the city of Chicago in

1893 Pausing in the midst of his discourse, the speaker asked that every member of his audience who had read the sacred books of the Hindus and who therefore had first hand knowledge of their religion, would raise his hand. Only three or four hands were raised though the audience represented presumably the leading theologians of many lands.

Glancing benignly over this assembly the Hindu raised himself to his full height, and in a voice every accent of which must have smote the audience as a rebuke, pronounced these simple words "And yet you dare to judge us!"

—The Historian's History of the World Vol II  
Page 547

---

All the above mentioned books are to be had at reduced rates for the subscribers of Udvodhan a Bengali Monthly Organ of the Rama Krishna Math (Annual Subscription—Rs. 2)

Besides the above all the original Bengali Works of the Swami and the Bengali Translations of his English works are always available

Photos and Half tone Pictures of Sri Rama Krishna and of Swami Vivekananda are also to be had at

## **THE UDVODHAN OFFICE,**

**12, 13 Gopal Chandra Neogi's Lane,  
BAGHBAZAR P O CALCUTTA**